

## LIBERAL STUDIES (HONG KONG STUDIES) AS-LEVEL

8.30 am – 11.00 am (2½ hours)

This paper must be answered in English

1. This paper consists of **Section 1** and **Section 2**. Section 1 carries 75% of the module marks, and Section 2 carries 25%.
2. **Section 1** consists of three questions, *all* of which are to be answered. **Section 2** consists of four questions, of which candidates may attempt any *one*.
3. Each question is worth 25 marks: 20 marks are allocated for content and 5 marks for effective communication.
4. The maximum content marks are indicated in brackets at the end of each question and sub-question. They are a guide to the length of answer required, which may vary from one to several paragraphs.
5. Candidates are reminded that this subject emphasises the ability to present and support points of view in a clear, concise and logical manner, rather than the ability to recite facts.

## SECTION 1

Answer *all* the questions in this section.

1. Consider the following information:

### **Reading Literacy (mother-tongue) Study of Hong Kong Primary Students**

In 2001, 35 countries and territories took part in a study of the primary students' progress in reading literacy (mother-tongue). Part of the study findings related to Hong Kong is summarised below:

- When a group of Hong Kong students took a test in primary one, they ranked top at reading words, writing words and reading sentences. However, when they reached primary four and took another reading test, their ranking dropped to 14 (scored 528), slightly higher than the international average score of 500.
- The reading culture and environment of Hong Kong's families are far below the international standard. Only 4% of the families in Hong Kong possessed more than 100 books, and provided three to four types of study and reading aid, e.g., a private study table, to their children; and 21% of the parents never read books.
- Students scoring 615 or above are regarded as 'reading achievers'. England was top of the ranking of reading achievers with 24%, while Hong Kong had a mere 6%, far below the international average standard of 10%. Nevertheless, only 8% students in Hong Kong did not meet the basic reading requirements.

Note: Adapted from a report on *Reading Literacy (mother-tongue) study of Hong Kong Primary Student*, Education and Manpower Bureau, 2003. Downloaded from <http://cd.emb.gov.hk/readingtolearn/chi/referencemain/readabilitysurvey.htm>.

- (a) Discuss the primary school language education problems reflected in the above findings of the study. (10 marks)
- (b) Suggest ways through which schools can help students cultivate and develop a reading habit and literacy. (10 marks)

2. Consider the following information:

Picture A



Government officials and the participants of the National Day flag-raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square

Picture B



The April Fifth Action was staging a protest in the designated area near Golden Bauhinia Square, where the Chief Executive was attending the flag-raising ceremony. The group was calling for an end to one-party dictatorship in mainland China, the release of all dissidents and the rehabilitation of the June Fourth Incident.

Note: Pictures are from *Singtao Daily*, 2 October 2003.

Discuss whether the values as reflected by the behaviour and attitudes of the above two groups of people are in conflict, and state respectively the rationale behind them. (10 marks + 10 marks)

3. Consider the following information:

### **Press Council sued for libel for the first time**

The Hong Kong Press Council has been sued for libel for the first time for condemning a report which appeared in a magazine. In June, the Council issued a press statement condemning *Next* magazine for publishing nude pictures of a schoolgirl taken by herself. The press statement received quite a lot of media coverage and *Next* magazine claimed that the said press statement constituted a libellous action.

The writ issued by *Next* magazine states that the Council described the relevant report as 'pornographic', and by citing the name of the school the girl attended, the magazine only intended to create an obscene effect. *Next* magazine further claims that it was criticised by the Council for publishing the report unethically, making use of the loopholes in law against pornographic magazines just to appeal to sensationalism and please readers.

*Next* magazine says the report had been classified by the Obscene and Indecent Articles Tribunal as class 1—neither obscene nor indecent. Not being a member of the Hong Kong Press Council, *Next* magazine has neither accepted the Council's supervision nor allowed investigation by the Council into the public complaints received.

The Council was set up in 1999. In 2001, it proposed that the government turns it into a statutory body so that, with the protection of 'Qualified Privilege' by law, it could be free from libel suits when condemning publicly the conduct of the media. The proposal was later withdrawn.

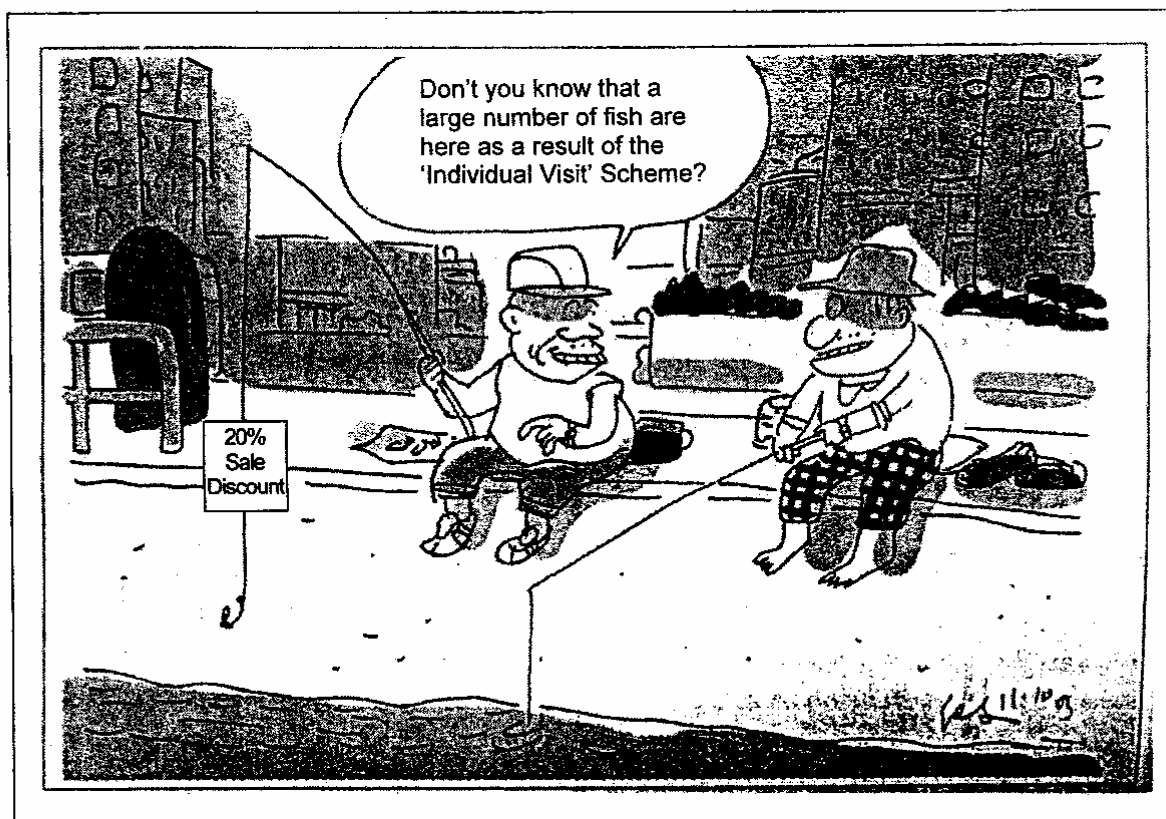
Note: Adapted from *Mingpao Daily*, 10 October 2003.

- (a) If you were the defense lawyer for the Press Council, how would you defend on its behalf?  
(10 marks)
- (b) Discuss whether you agree that the Press Council should be granted 'Qualified Privilege'.  
(10 marks)

## SECTION 2

Answer *one* question from this section.

4. Consider the following information:



Note: Adapted from *Mingpao Daily*, 11 October 2003.

- (a) To what extent does the message communicated in the above cartoon reflect the direction of economic development in Hong Kong? Explain your answer. (10 marks)
- (b) Discuss what measures the government should adopt to complement the business opportunities implied in the above cartoon. (10 marks)

5. Consider the following information:

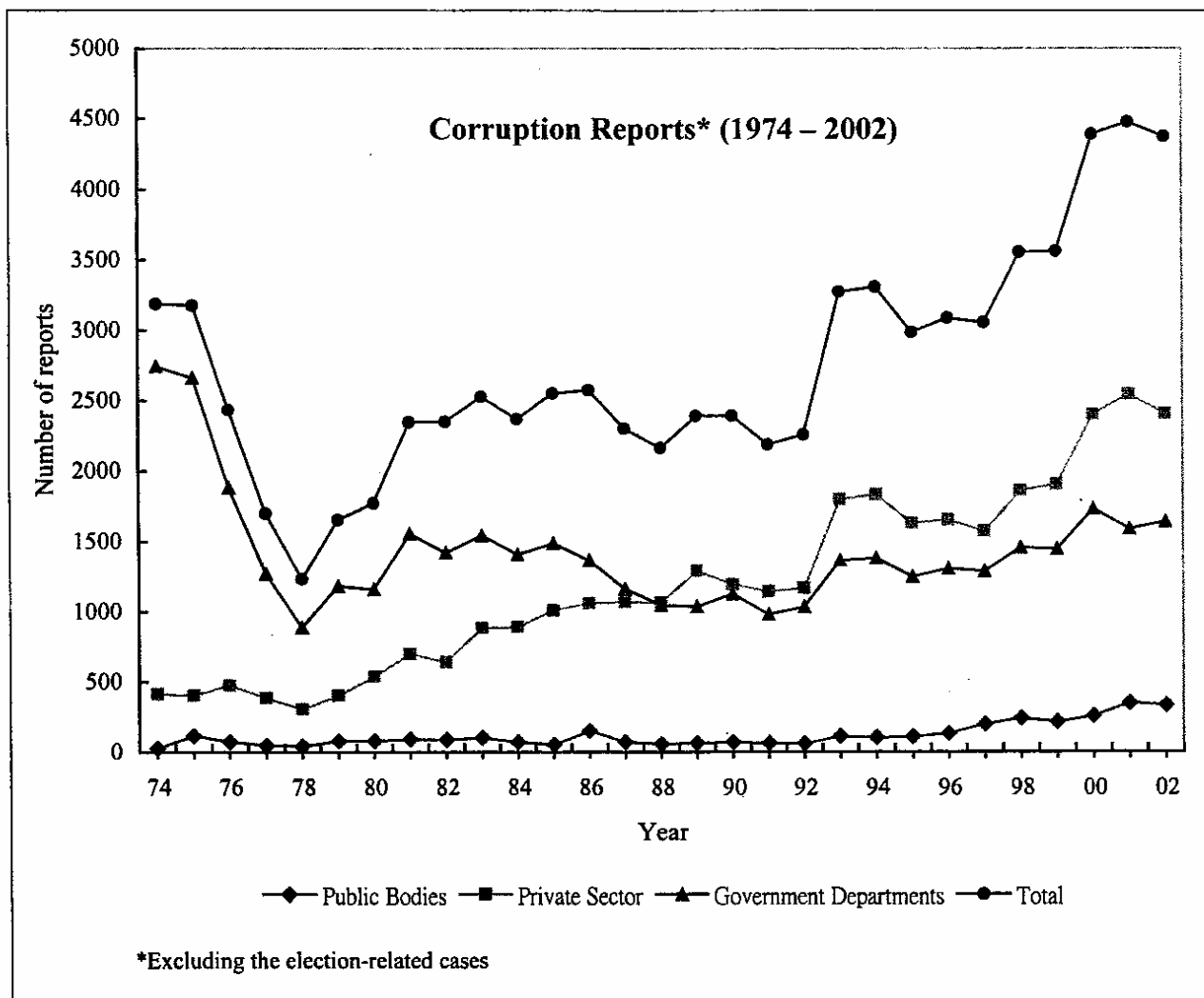
Anson Chan Fang On-sang, the former Chief Secretary for Administration, gave the following responses to the July 1 mass rally:

- Public aspirations for democracy will not be forsaken as the economy improved. It is clearly stated in the Basic Law that universal suffrage is the ultimate aim.
- Political reform and the pace of developing democracy are a very complicated and sensitive issue. It is not easy to reach a consensus among different sectors in society and the Central Authorities.
- It would be advantageous to the Central Authorities to implement political reforms in Hong Kong. Hong Kong could be a trial case to demonstrate to the Mainland, Taiwan and the world that the 'one country, two systems' can be more successfully implemented.

Note: Adapted from *Mingpao Daily*, 29 September 2003.

- (a) Do you agree that it is not easy to reach a consensus among different sectors in society and the Central Authorities on political reforms and the pace of developing democracy? Explain your answer. (10 marks)
- (b) In which direction, in your view, should political reform go so that it may be accepted both by the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong people? Explain your answer. (10 marks)

6. Consider the following information:



Source: Independent Commission Against Corruption, 2003. Downloaded from <http://www.icac.org.hk/big5/0/1/7/24.html>.

- (a) Based on the above information, describe and explain the trend of the number of corruption reports received by the Independent Commission Against Corruption between 1974 and 2002. (10 marks)
- (b) How successful is the work of the Independent Commission Against Corruption? Explain your answer. (10 marks)

7. Consider the following information:

**CMI schools' HKCEE English results decline  
But a rise in overall passing rates**

In 1998, the government divided all the local secondary schools into two categories: CMI schools (those using Chinese as the medium of instruction) and EMI schools (those using English as the medium of instruction). The first cohort of students affected by this policy will receive their Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) results today.

The Education and Manpower Bureau has classified the CMI and EMI schools students into three groups—high, medium and low—based on their academic abilities. Among the 300 CMI schools, students in these three groups all show a higher pass rate than last year in a number of subjects. The number of students in the high-ability group who have passed in five subjects or above is even higher than last year by 2.8%. However, students taking English (Syllabus B) have overall received worse results than last year although students in 40 CMI schools have done better. In 12 CMI schools which switched to English as the medium of instruction in Forms Four and Five, students' pass rates in five subjects or above are lower than last year.

HKCEE results show that in 112 EMI schools, the overall pass rate of the medium-ability group of students in most subjects has dropped when compared with last year; high-ability students' pass rates in a number of subjects have dropped as well. This suggests that they are unable to study in English effectively.

The overall pass rate in English (Syllabus B) in HKCEE this year is 63.6%, a one percent drop from the previous year.

Note: Adapted from *Mingpao Daily*, 6 August 2003.

- (a) With reference to the above information, comment on the effectiveness of the policy of the medium of instruction. (10 marks)
- (b) Propose how to improve the policy of the medium of instruction in the light of your own observation and experience. (10 marks)

**END OF PAPER**